DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 308 756 HE 022 530

AUTHOR Noffke, Susan E.
TITLE The Social Context of Action Research: A Comparative and Historical Analysis.
PUB DATE 31 Mar 89
NOTE 42p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, CA, March 27-31, 1989).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Action Research; *Educational Research; Evaluation Methods; Higher Education; Social Action; Social Change; Theory Practice Relationship

ABSTRACT

The context of the emergence of action research is explored historically and comparatively. The primary focus is a description of the development of action research in the middle part of this century in the United States. Certain assumptions, intentions, and practices of educational action research as they emerged in the early stages of development are explained. Some central aspects of educational action research, both in the present and in earlier areas, are identified. Areas of focus include the following: democracy, social engineering, and social change; research for re-education; curriculum studies and the science of education; growing up in educational practice; the method of science; depoliticizing action research; inservice and personal development; persistent themes in action research; and understanding action research today. Though action research declined in prominence in the late 1950s, it remained consistent. In the 1970s action research continued in several areas. The strongest theme is the idea of the teacher as researcher. Other themes in many of the recent action research projects are the knowledge-practice gap, issues of race, class, and gender, demographic changes in the school population, and school-based alternative models for curriculum development. Contains about 97 references. (SM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED308756

The Social Context of Action Research:

A Comparative and Historical Analysis

Susan E. Noffke

University of Wisconsin - Madison

A Paper presented at the Annual Meeting

of the American Educational Research Association

San Francisco, March 31, 1989

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Susan E. Noffke

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

HE 022 530

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

> It is less than ten years ago that, defying hosts of prejudices, the attempt was made to proceed from descriptive studies of social relations and attitudes to what may be called "action research" on groups. It is not merely the nearness to problems of the practice which lies behind this particular interest in changes, but the fact that the stuff of experimentally created changes gives deeper insight into the dynamics of group life...Only experiments in changes can, finally, lay open the deeper layers of group dynamics.
>
> Such action research started as a mere trickle with studying children's clubs...But the trickle has become a creek and will become a river. We are moving toward a full-fledged experimental science of group dynamics which will include the problems of leadership and leadership training, ideology and culture, group morale and group production, discipline and group organization, in short, all phases of group life. (Lewin, 1944, p. 195.)

This optimistic quotation from Kurt Lewin is an appropriate way to begin an exploration of the context of the emergence of that research form known as "action research". The growth of educational action research internationally in the past 15-20 years, seems to be a fulfillment of Lewin's vision. Yet this burgeoning of interest is also an occasion to consider why such a change in the focus of educational research is occurring. This paper will address this question historically and comparatively. The primary focus of the paper is a description of the development of action research in the middle part of the century. It will describe some of the assumptions, intentions, and practices of educational action research as they emerged in its early stages of development. Through this, contextual themes in the development of action research will be revealed.

By exploring the antecedents of this research form in education, and drawing on some of the developments in other areas of social research, the paper will "fill out" some of the earlier writings on the history of action research (Kemmis, 1980; Schubert and Schubert, 1984; Peters and Robinson, 1984; Wallace, 1987; McKernan, 1988; McTaggart, 1988). Although each of these illuminates important aspects of the development of action research, none is meant to be a thorough historical examination. Each covers only part of the history, focusing on Dewey and the curriculum development efforts of the 1930's or tracing out a lineage from Collier to Lewin to a "decline" with Corey, Taba, and Shumsky. Each

to some extent carries with it an implicit emphasis on a "correct" version of action research. This study, by focusing attention on the development of action research in the middle of the century in the United States, allows the central tendencies to emerge, not as a neat succession of intellectual traditions situated in an era of great social change, but as a complex web of contextual features with contradictory themes.

The paper identifies some central aspects of educational action research, both in that earlier era and in the present. In attempting to understand the often conflicting forms of action research, various category systems have been used. In these, it has frequently been argued that action research in the United States has been of a "traditional" (McKernan, 1988) or "technical" (Kemmis, 1980) nature, while those in the U.K. have been "practical", in the sense of being part of a "moral science" (Elliott, 1987). Those of the "Deakin Group" in Australia and some groups in parts of the European continent have been regarded as "critical" or "emancipatory" (Grundy, 1982; McTaggart, 1988). Although these categories may be useful in seeing the nature of differing forms of action research, they are hierarchical in nature, with the "highest" often form fitting the vision of the authors. Thus they obscure both the relationships between the various forms of action research and the contradictions inherent in all of them. This historical analysis will show, through a focus on the recurrence of several contextual themes and on a central tension between "democracy" and "social engineering", that the developments in the middle part of the century in the United States embody aspects of all these categories of action research.

The word "context" as used in this paper denotes a complex assemblage of "causalities", rather than a single cause-effect linkage in history, or a simple passing of intellectual traditions. The works of Lewin and others associated with action research form a middle and a transition point for education and educational research in this century. Looking at them allows us an opportunity to look backward and forward into the history of educational efforts from a time

when context is a clear factor in educational change. The context is one of international events - two world wars and the Great Depression, potentially influential in the development of education and educational research in many countries. Yet these larger events are only a part of the context. Education, its institutions and its participants have histories which, though influenced by great events, develop, too, as a result of other factors.

Of "Democracy", "Social Engineering", and Social Change Born

In various writings on the history of action research (e.g. Corey, 1953), there are several commonly cited antecedents for the ideas embodied in the practices of educational action research. One comes from the use of applied anthropology in the government services, especially the work of John Collier. A second is the work of Kurt Lewin and his followers in the field of social psychology. The third is actually two aspects of educational developments, especially the field of curriculum study. Included here are the ideas of John Dewey and the "field studies" aspect to the "scientific movement" in education. All three of these have influenced the various forms of action research today, to varying degrees. The contextual themes present in all three were important, too, to one of the early instances of action research in education - the curriculum work of the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute. The differing contributions of these three branches of the action research family, as well as their similarities deserve clarification.

The first of these sources, the work of John Collier, Commissioner of Indian Affairs from 1933-1945, seems at first to be vastly separated from the work of "educationists" of the time, yet there were important connections. Earlier in his career, Collier was very active in education. With his wife, he started The Home School, which combined work, play, and study. He also worked with the People's Institute and other organizations in New York on community projects, often to benefit children. These projects involved field research and teaching, and focused on the development of methods which would "insure a maximum

degree of local democracy" (Collier, 1963, p. 87). John Dewey was on the advisory board of Collier's New York Training School for Community Workers, and William Heard Kilpatrick met frequently with its students (p. 84).

The theme of "community" was important in Collier's plans for implementing the Indian Reorganization Act of 1933 (Stefon, 1983, pp. 83-84), and it was also a theme in educational work in general during this era (Everett, 1938). Collier's work in the movement toward education of Native Americans on the reservations in community, rather than boarding schools, was closely tied to several members of the Progressive Education Association, who also held posts with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. W. Carson Ryan, Jr. and Willard Beatty, for example, were the first two Directors of Indian Education for the U.S. Indian Service in the early 1930's and each served as president of the Progressive Education Association. The actual educational platform for the community schools under Ryan's administration added vocational counselling and the use of native crafts into the state approved curriculum, with aims of broadening the availability of education to more Indian children and facilitating adjustment to modern life through increased "racial pride" (Iverson, 1978, p. 235). Under Beatty, the focus, at least until the end of Collier's tenure, was on "local culture and resource-centered education, flexibility of program, bilingual teaching, native language literacy, and the goal of native self-sufficiency" (Iverson, p. 235; Beatty, 1940). After Collier's tenure in Indian Affairs, the educational emphasis was to fall again on "mastery of the material culture of the dominant race" (Beatty in Iverson, p. 236). The actual implementation of Collier's policies may have been limited (see Iverson), but at least one account of earlier work in reservation community schools (see Ryan, et al., 1932) is filled with examples, not only of the use of aspects of Native American culture in the children's curriculum, but also of explorations of the role of culture itself in children's learning.

Related to Collier's work is the general trend during the early part of the century towards documenting everyday lives and practices, and the emergence of

"applied" anthropology as a field of study. The work of Edward Curtis in photographing Native Americans, the many projects of the WPA, for example, James Agee and Walker Evans' (1960) Let Us Now Praise Famous Men, can be seen as an indication of efforts to collect information in the "field", often on poor or "minority" peoples, and often to influence policy decisions. The development of "applied" branches of research is important both in the sense that it responded to a need to facilitate social improvement, rather than only to accumulate experimental data and theories, and in the sense that it opened up a whole new branch of opportunities for a generation of social scientists. Many of these social scientists were later to work in the World War II efforts, including in the Japanese "relocation" centers, and in post-war reconstruction efforts and "development" strategies in many areas of the world (James, 1986). Collier, for example, after his resignation from Indian Affairs, concerned himself, among other projects, with colonial peoples' efforts toward independence.

Collier's work, then, is representative of general trends toward a more "anthropological" form of study, the promotion of a version of "progressive" education, and the emphasis on local community work during this era. He described a form of "action-research, research-action" carried out in small Native American communities, in the area of soil conservation (Collier, 1945). The chief characteristics of such work seemed to be an emphasis on the "felt need, related to action" (p. 294) on the part of the community expected to benefit concretely from the research, and on the importance of a non-directive role for the consulting "experts".

There are, then, several important themes to the work of Collier - "progressive" education, "field study", the "community", "democracy", and "ethnic relations", themes which would continue to reemerge in various forms in later versions of action research. Collier rejected the term "race" as a "projection by the white man, the Indian's persecutor" (1945, p.266). In the same article, he delivered a scathing criticism of the history of U.S. policy toward Native

Americans, comparing it to Hitler's intentions for the Poles and Jews (p. 266). Conversely, he gives a mostly positive report of the Bureau's activities in implementing the Indian Reorganization Act of 1933. The problems of "ethnic relations" were, to Collier, the major issues of the post-war world, and could be resolved only by recognizing and revitalizing the ethnic society and lands, and recapturing a sense of "community". This was to be accomplished through the establishment of democracy - "self-governing self-determination". His concept of democracy is an interesting one. He asserts: "the experience of responsible democracy was of all experiences, the most therapeutic, the most disciplinary, the most dynamogenic, and the most productive of efficiency". It was "the way of order" (p. 275).

Research was to play a vital role in this change. By waiting until the community itself recognized the need for change and asked for assistance, conflicts were avoided. Although persistent problems with government policies were noted, there was no intent toward change at that level. In fact, Collier later noted that the failures of the "Indian New Deal" were in part due to the lack of understanding, on his part, of the government bureaucracies (Collier, 1963, pp. 224-225).

Collier was not specific as to exactly what the nature of the the "action-research, research-action" was to be, except that it was to be integrative - that is, using the critiques of the layman and administrator as well as the researcher (1945, p. 276), and cooperative - involving a variety of disciplines (pp. 294-295). He noted research outcomes beyond physical changes in the environment:

> Whatever the worth to pure science this particular research enterprise may prove to have, it has intellectually led members of the Indian service, far more deeply than before, into viewing ethnic problems in universal terms (p. 296).

For the members of the community, as well, non-material outcomes were found:

> Making people free by helping them to confront real emergencies which they are capable of mastering is equivalent to the creation of new human and social energies (p. 296).

For Collier, then, action research meant a "grass roots" level activity, aimed at the resolution of local problems, not larger political changes, yet it also yielded knowledge for the specialists as well. He summarized: "...research should be evoked by needs of action, should be integrative of many disciplines, should involve both administrator and the layman, and should feed itself into action" (p. 300).

Collier, like many other social scientists in the state service, was aware of the potential of research efforts to be used for social control, for example to provide bilingual education so that information would be more accessible, thus making outside-developed policies easier to implement (See James, 1986). He remained convinced, though, that the local population must have the final word in decisions. This has been interpreted as indicating Collier's faith in "democratic action through voluntary unanimity", a concept he gained through study of Kropotkin's Mutual Aid (Stefon, 1983, pp. 15-17).

In his autobiography, clearly associated "managerial" forms with manipulation and authoritarianism and rejected them:

> In our Western industrial-political world, it is the manipulative, exploitative, and imposed-purpose norm or mode which has been principally in the saddle both as a concept and as practice for the two or three centuries past...The huge technological sweep, the organizations for the engineering of consent, the panic of speed of change, the looming Third World War, add up to a situation wherin the way of commanding, manipulating, imposed patterning, and managerial technic, appears to many to be the only practicable way. (Collier, 1963, p.234).

For Collier, the alternative "way", included "democracy", but also two other factors: "permissive methods applied to child development and social case work, perhaps a result of his earlier educational activities, and group dynamics", the project of his friend, Kurt Lewin (Collier, 1963, p. 234).

The contradiction between the potential of "democratic means" being used both for "engineered change" and real self-determination was particularly salient in the work of social scientists of the time, both in Indian Affairs and later in the Japanese "relocation" centers during the war (James, 1986). This desire for both democratic means and social improvement guided by principles from "outside" the field setting, was to remain a central tension in later developments in action research.

Collier referred to his "action-research, research-action" as being on the verge of "social planning", which he saw as being in the beginning stages of development (1945, p. 297). Aspects of a more fully developed form, referred to as "social engineering" (Graebner, 1987), can be found in the work of Kurt Lewin, whom Collier consider a close friend. It is Lewin who is the second and, at least from an international perspective, a most significant figure in early action research.

Research for Re-education

Lewin shared major interests with Collier: a faith in democratic forms and a concern for understanding the "dynamics" of the group in order to resolve social problems. A Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany, Lewin was also keenly aware of the importance of what Collier had called "ethnic relations" (Marrow, 1969). He and his colleagues at the Iowa Child Welfare Station worked on topics which reflected not only the strong interest he had in democracy, but which were easily seen as having direct application to schools. He wrote about his work, and that of Lippitt and White, on "autocratic, democratic, and "laissez-faire" atmospheres in children's groups in several "progressive" journals of the time (Lewin, 1938; Lewin & Lewin, 1942).

Interestingly, Lewin's concept of democracy, like Collier's, emphasized its efficiency, but without the aversion to "management". Some of this perceived connection between democracy and efficiency may have been the result of the criticisms of democratic means as inefficient (Lewin, 1944, pp. 196-197). Another

influence may have been his connection to research in industry, which tied increased participation in decision-making by workers to greater productivity (Marrow, 1969, pp. 141-152; Graebner, 1987, pp. 75-77). These studies were beginning to yield information about the function of the group in changing individual attitudes and behavior. The tendency to see action research as a way to better facilitate curriculum change (Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute Staff, 1948, pp. 343-346; Benne, 1948) as well as a way to change teachers' attitudes toward the use of more "traditional" research can be seen to be related to this aspect of Lewin's work. The latter theme can be found in the action research writings of the post-war years (Horace Mann-Lincoln Study Group, 1948, p. 113), and it is often a part of modern versions of action research (See Noffke and Zeichner, 1987).

With the onset of World War II, Lewin was able to apply much of what he had learned about social change to new problems. The earlier findings on the effects of "human relations" on productivity were applied to problems in the changing of housewives' food buying habits through group discussion methods rather than lectures (Lewin, 1947), in the selection and training of leadership, in morale, and in psychological warfare (Marrow, 1969, pp. 153-156).

The terms Lewin would use to describe the actual process of action research reflect, to some extent, the war-time context. A clear description of what action research actually involved for Lewin will enable a comparison to later forms.

> Planning usually starts with a general idea. For one reason or another it seems desirable to reach a certain objective. Exactly how to circumscribe this objective, and how to reach it is frequently not too clear. The first step then is to examine the idea carefully in the light of the means available. Frequently more fact-finding about the situation is required. If this first period of planning is successful, two items emerge: namely an 'overall plan' of how to reach the objective and secondly, a decision in regard to the first step of action. Usually this planning has also somewhat modified the original idea.
>
> The next period is devoted to executing the first step of the overall plan.
>
> In highly developed fields of social management, such as modern factory management or the execution of a war, this second step is followed by certain fact-finding...
>
> This reconnaissance or fact-finding has four functions. First it should evaluate the action. It shows whether what has been achieved is above or below expectation. Secondly, it gives the planners a chance to learn, that is, to gather new general insight,...Thirdly, this fact-finding should serve as a basis for modifying the 'overall plan'.
>
> The next step again is comprised of a circle of planning, executing, and reconnaissance or fact-finding for the purpose of evaluating the results of the second step, for preparing the rational basis for planning the third step, and for perhaps modifying again the overall plan.
>
> Rational social management, therefore, proceeds in a spiral of steps each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action, and fact-finding about the result of the action (Lewin, 1946. In Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988, p. 42).

In Lewin's formulation of action research, there is a clear focus on instituting changes - taking actions, carefully collecting information on their effects, and then evaluating them, rather than formulating hypotheses to be tested, although the eventual development of theories was important. This represents not only a clear distinction from the dominant research forms of the time, but also emphasizes Lewin's concern with resolving issues, not merely collecting information and writing about them. The theory developed as a result of the research was theory about change, not about the problem/topic itself.

It is important at this point to remember the nature of that war in which efforts Lewin was involved, and his own position as a Jewish refugee. The context

was one of crucial issues, ones affecting the daily lives of millions of people. The overriding theme, and the major focus for all of his subsequent work, was that of prejudice. Central to that notion was the concept of "re-education" (Lewin and Grabbe, 1945). Concerned with the changing of attitudes toward minorities, Lewin and his colleagues in the Commission on Community Interrelations of the American Jewish Congress and at the Research Center for Group Dynamics at MIT, worked on projects related to problems of assimilation versus pluralism, of segregation versus integration, of discrimination, as well as of class stratification. These studies frequently included explanations of the uses of action research in resolving problems of prejudice (e.g. Lippitt and Radke, 1946).

The concern with issues of race and class of many of the early action researchers, as well as those more recent, could be interpreted to emphasize part of the "democratic" nature of the work on action research. Much of action research can be seen as being "on" or "for" people somehow "disadvantaged". Yet this fact also raises the contradiction between the uses of "democratic" methods for "worthwhile democratic ends" and what Collier considered the undemocratic specter of social engineering. Lewin, however, resolved this "difficulty" in this way:

> We do not want group manipulation...But we do need that amount of management of groups which is necessary for harmonious living together. We want this group management to be done "by the people, for the people" (Lewin, cited in Graebner, 1987, p. 144)

He outlined his view of the interdependence of "democracy" and "planning":

> The survival and development of democracy depends not so much on the development of democratic ideals which are wide-spread and so strong. Today, more than ever before, democracy depends upon the development of efficient forms of democratic social management and upon the spreading of the skill in such management to the common man (Lewin, 1947, p. 153).

Considering Lewin's life experiences, it would not be surprising that the lessons of the Weimar Republic may too have led to a concern that democracy be efficient in addressing pressing problems, and to an understanding that "populist" programs

do not always lead to democracy. The actual way in which an attitude change effected by one group upon another could still be seen as "by the people, for the people" remains a crucial issue for action research today.

Lewin's wartime work, primarily with the Office of Naval Research, was to lead to a method of identifying and solving problems known as "Operational Research". The distinctions between various kinds of action research, including operational research, as they are used in social work and industry, are often unclear and overlapping (See Lees, 1975, pp. 69-72; Hult and Lennung, 1980). For example, the term action research is also used by those whose interest lie in innovation implementation and evaluation (Tornatzky, et al., 1980; Rapoport, 1985) and in organizational change (Jenks, 1970; Clark, P. 1972; Clark, A., 1976).

The confusion over the use of the term action research, can be seen as a result of the tremendous development of methods of applied research begun during this era. By the late 1940's, work on action research was sufficiently developed that Chien, Cook, and Harding (1948), members of the CCI, were able to outline four varieties of action research: diagnostic, participant, empirical, and experimental. "Diagnostic" action research, was, as the term implied, a sort of medical consultation. A research agency stepped into an already existing problem situation, preferably by invitation. It diagnosed the situation, and then made various recommendations for remedial measures (p. 49).

"Participant" action research was an outgrowth of some of the problems with the "diagnostic" variety. Like some patients, clients of the research agency did not always follow the recommendations of the researchers. Therefore, in this variety, the people who were to take the action were included in the research process from the beginning. As Collier had noted, this way people were more aware of the needs for action, and through their participation in the decision-making process, they were more committed to its completion (Chien, Cook, and Harding, 1948, p.50). The role of the consultant in this variety was seen to include not

only technical assistance, but also public relations functions. It is important to note that the role of the research process itself in effecting attitude change can be seen as a form of social engineering - making the implementation of aims, determined at least partially from "outside" the participants, more "effective".

The research process in the "empirical" variety was primarily a matter of record-keeping. The researcher would keep track of the strategies planned by various groups for the resolution of their problems, forming hypotheses about the changes that might occur in their attitudes and behaviors. The accumulation of experiences recorded on a day to day basis, might, then, in spite of problems of adequate controls, lead to a gradual development of generally valid principles (p. 51). As with the "diagnostic" variety, there is a similarity to the manner in which medical knowledge is accumulated.

The final variety, the "experimental", consisted of "controlled research on the relative effectiveness of various action techniques" (p.51). This variety was to be "research on action in the strictest sense of both words", and was seen as having the "greatest potential value for the advance of scientific knowledge". It alone could provide for "a definitive test of a specific hypothesis" (p. 51).

The varieties of action research show some of how the term could have become such a broad "umbrella" for various activities in education and in other fields. Changes in the context and the interplay between notions of action research and traditions within the fields themselves may also account for differences. The description of the varieties also identifies a number of techniques in industry, in education, and in the social sciences, such as "quality circles" and "evaluation research", which share a common ancestor in action research.

Lewin envisioned a version of social science, exemplified in the four varieties of action research, that would integrate social theory and social action. He saw good social theory as inevitably "practical" and stressed the

important function that he believed action research would play in its development:

> The research needed for social practice can best be characterized as research for social management or social engineering. It is a type of action-research, a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action, and research leading to social action. Research that produces nothing but books will not suffice (1947, p. 150).

For Lewin, action research did not mean a lessening of the standards required of scientific research:

> This by no means implies that the research needed is in any respect less scientific or "lower" than what would be required for pure science in the field of social events. I am inclined to hold the opposite to be true...In regard to social engineering, too, progress will depend largely on the rate with which basic research in social sciences can develop deeper insight into the laws which govern social life. This "basic social research" will have to include the whole range of descriptive fact-finding in regard to small and large social bodies. Above all, it will have to include laboratory and field experiments in social change. (1947, pp. 150-151).

Social action and social theory were, to Lewin, an integrated whole whose goals were determined by notions of democracy and social justice. The methods of social science could be equally as rigorous as those of the natural sciences, and therefore equally as legitimate.

The Depression, the work with an oppressed minority, and the urgency of the wartime efforts provided the social context for the research form that Lewin and Collier advocated. Such events emphasize the need for social science to develop efficient means to gather information relevant to immediate social needs. In both Lewin and Collier, such needs resulted in an emphasis on several themes. One is the necessity for research to be in the "field", in all of its complexity. A concern with social justice is evident in both, as is a tension between "democratic" ends and "social engineering" means. All of these were also present in the later developments of action research in education.

Curriculum Studies and the Science of Education

Lewin shared with some "progressive" educators an interest in group processes and "learning by doing". Both supported efforts at setting up student

self-government, learning by group work, and the development of democratic leadership (Lewin & Lewin, 1942; Marrow, 1969, p. 167). Certainly cooperation and learning "how to live and work together" were recurrent themes in the years surrounding World War II (e.g. Lewin, 1944. See also, for example, the 1940 issues of Elementary School Journal).

It would seem that a melding of "progressive" education with emerging methods in the social sciences could provide one explanation for the emergence of action research in education. Yet, the education field itself, had, of course, been working out its own definition of legitimate research. The dominant form of educational research in the early 20th century could be typified by the testing and measurement movement, by "activity analysis" works, and by the "fact-finding" of the U.S. Office of Education (Whipple, 1938). Yet there was more, even then, to educational research than numbers, factors, and controlled laboratory experiments, although these clearly played a major role. One early text advocating research by teachers (Buckingham, 1926), for example, outlines the value of "case studies" to the accumulation of knowledge and the betterment of the teacher's position, but remains clearly within what today would be called the "quantitative" tradition.

In the years between the Twenty-Sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, dealing with curriculum construction and the Forty-Fourth Yearbook, dealing with curriculum reconstruction, several types of educational research were taking place (Grim, 1948). Grim chose to look at two central "foci of the curriculum: child growth and dynamic American Society". He identified the "laboratory schools" and the "social-function procedure in curriculum development" as influential, and studies of the psychology of learning, child development, selection and organization of learning materials, methodology, and individual differences as the contributions of psychological study to the curriculum. He also discusses the trend toward "field study research" in the

1930's, especially noting the Eight Year Study of the Progressive Education Association (Aikin, 1942; Grim, pp. 21-28).

The trend toward field studies is an important link in the action research family. Then, as now, this aspect of the "scientific movement" in education is frequently cited as one of the "sources" for a "theory of action research" (Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute Staff, 1948, p. 310; Schubert and Schubert, 1984; McKernan, 1988). By the late 1930's and early 1940's there were two important alternatives to laboratory experiments. One was typified by the Eight Year Study, an attempt on the part of the Progressive Education Association to effect changes in the high school curriculum by loosening the control exerted through college entrance requirements (Kliebard, 1986, pp. 213-222). A key aspect of that project relevant to the later development of action research, was that the changes, seen as "experiments", were made at the school level, by the teachers and administrators, with the assistance of consultants (Schubert and Schubert, 1984, pp. 16-17). This type of school-based curriculum study can be seen to include such projects as the Michigan Study of the Secondary School Curriculum, the Teacher Education Commission (Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute Staff, 1948, p. 310), and the Virginia Curriculum Program (Kliebard, 1986, pp. 223-226). All of these were part of "...the increasingly popular notion that curriculum revision should be undertaken by the participants who would be called upon to implement the innovations" (Kliebard, p. 223). In beginning the Eight Year Study, an important motivational factor had been the dissatisfaction with the amount of impact "progressive" ideas had actually had in the schools, especially in the secondary school curriculum (p. 213). The Virginia program had gained "wide acceptance" and had included "extensive participation of teachers in curriculum development activities" (p. 226). The link between participation and acceptance of reform is an aspect of the social engineering side of action research that would later be more fully explored.

A second form for educational research can be found in the work of John Dewey. Goodwin Watson, writing in 1949 in honor of Dewey's 90th birthday, found good reason to believe that Dewey had long since outlined a conceptual basis for action research (p. 142). Dewey held a vision of educational research method that contrasted starkly with the natural science-inspired experiments, typified by the work of Thorndike and his followers in the psychology field of the time. Dewey asserted: "Educational science cannot be constructed simply by borrowing the technique of experiment and measurement found in physical science" (Dewey, 1929, p. 13). He sought, rather, "methods which enable us to make an analysis of what the gifted teacher does intuitively, so that something accruing from his work can be communicated to others" (p.5).

Dewey made it clear that he was not seeking a series of general rules, but rather, used an analogy to engineering science, which "progressively incorporates more and more of science into itself" (1929, p. 6). In fact he cautioned:

> When, in education, the psychologist or observer and experimentalist in any field reduces his findings to a rule which is to be uniformly adopted, then, only, is there a result which is objectionable and destructive of the free play of education as an art (p. 6).

This cannot be seen as endorsing a preoccupation with utility or as reflecting the rejection of a need for theory, however. Like Lewin, Dewey considered theory to be "the most practical of all things" (p. 8).

In the same essay, Dewey addressed the issue of the "sources" of an educational science and concluded:

> (1) that educational practices provide the data, the subject matter, which form the problems of inquiry. They are the sole source of the ultimate problems to be investigated. These educational practices are also (2) the final test of value of the conclusions of all researches...Actual activities in educating test the worth of scientific results (1929, pp. 16-17).

Given that education provided the materials of educational science, we are still left with the question of method. Schubert and Schubert (1984) provide a useful synthesis of Dewey's conception of research method from two of his works: How We Think (1910) and Logic, The Theory of Inquiry (1938). Drawing from the definition

of logic as "theory about the ways in which people solve problems", the Schuberts identify five "steps" in Dewey's method:

> 1. The experience of an indeterminate situation, i.e., disrupted equilibrium between organism and environment; 2. The conversion of the indeterminate situation from a mere dilemma to a problem capable of articulation; 3. The establishment of hypotheses along with broadly anticipated consequences of action upon them; 4. The elaboration and testing of the hypotheses; and 5. The reestablishment of a determinate situation (Schubert & Schubert, 1984, pp. 13-14).

The concern with establishing a "science" of education, based firmly in "field" research, and validated through educational practice parallel Lewin's outline of a social science research method. Dewey's emphasis on the defining of an educational problem and the inclusion of a hypothesis contrasted with Lewin's model, which seemed to focus more attention on the action step. It was Dewey's version of the process, combined with Lewin's understanding of "group dynamics" in a democracy, that would gradually emerge in the post-war years.

Growing up in Educational Practice

Dewey's essay cited earlier (1929), also provides a role for the teachers in educational research. Aware of the split between educational researchers and practitioners he concluded: "...it is impossible to see how there can be an adequate flow of subject-matter to set and control the problems investigators deal with, unless there is active participation on the part of those directly engaged in teaching" (p. 24). Involvement of teachers was to grow during the war-time and post-war era, building on the tradition of school-based curriculum development begun in the earlier decades. Yet why this occurred and what form it took is as yet unclear.

Cronbach and Suppes, writing on the history of educational research (1969), considered the war time and post-war eras as the middle of a period of decline and disillusionment. Research efforts were seen by them as ones in which "promotional activity supplante[d] inquiry". They listed the Depression, World War II, and the negative reactions to the potential threat on teachers and administrators that empiricism had brought (as well as its unfulfilled claims) as

contributing factors. Research, to them, had become an agent for change rather than a quest for new and better understanding. This trend was seen as reversed only by the passage of the Cooperative Educational Research Act of 1954, and the National Defense Education Act of 1958 (pp. 66-67). These acts and their successors would eventually return the bulk of educational research to the hands of the "experts", but for now, however, the "fact-finding" endeavors of the U.S. Office of Education and the activities of the Progressive Education Association seem not to have led to desired improvements, and the experimental laboratories of the educational psychologists had produced few changes in the classrooms. In those years surrounding the Second World War, there seems to be a supportable claim that research made a partial and temporary move from the universities towards schools and school districts.

To the founders of the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute for School Experimentation at Teachers College, the context was much as Cronbach and Suppes described, but they, of course, differed greatly in their perception of the nature of their research efforts. Begun in the fall of 1943, the Institute established "two basic study committees for the in-service education of teachers in local situations", focusing on two broad topics: understanding the social bases of the curriculum, headed by George S. Counts, and the implications of child development for the curriculum, headed by A. T. Jersild (Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute Staff, 1945, pp. 275-276).

Citing "rapidly changing conditions" that presented "markedly different needs for the years ahead", the Institute staff decided that "the most critical issues in American education require[d] a more typical setting for their effective study" than the private, experimental schools could provide (Teachers College Proposes..., 1946, p. 521). Seeking the possibility for experimentation "under conditions and with student bodies typical of those prevailing in the schools of the nation", including "different types of community conditions" and with schools with "typical organizations and settings" (p. 523) plans were made

to "initiate a plan of cooperative experimentation with a group of associated schools" (p. 522).

Gordon Mackenzie, who, along with Stephen Corey, became a special consultant to the Institute in 1944, attributed this change from experimental schools to affiliations with school districts to three trends: growth in schools' use of "experimentation as a means of curriculum improvement", the "marked trend toward community-oriented schools which use and serve their community, as well as work directly for improved community living", and "the phenomenal growth of enrollment in public schools, and the accompanying increase in the variability of pupils" (1946, p. 438). The first of these matches the trend toward toward school-based curriculum study discussed earlier and the second emphasizes Collier's concern with community schools. The third, that of increase in numbers and diversity of the school population, was to play a role in much of later action research.

The work of the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute was part of a much larger family of projects, similar in orientation, that were underway during this time (e.g. Collinge and Dimond, 1949; Pflieger, 1949; Bush, 1949). Of concern in many of these projects, was the "wide gap" between knowledge and practice (e.g. Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute Staff, 1948, p. 307; Hanson, 1948, p. 5). Hollis Caswell, described the era this way: "Following 1930 it is my judgment that there was a gradual waning of confidence in research" (1950, p. 438).

Yet there was another factor which influenced the course of educational research during this time. Especially important to emphasize is the curricular basis of the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute in a critique of the "conventional school subjects" approach to curriculum design (Goodson, 1946). An example of this was already being worked out at the Horace Mann-Lincoln School. Rather than "strictly logical and factual mentality" producing "a mechanical and emotionally cold process", the staff sought to include more of the "education of the emotions for moral and esthetic living", previously the domain of "the home and other

influences", into the school curriculum. A version of a "progressive" approach is clearly being advocated:

> ...education should be concerned with developing all facets of the individual: his mind, body, esthetic spirit, and moral conscience. This kind of education usually allows for individual differences, provides for learning by doing, and inducts the learner into educative experience. Then the school does not allow standards of conduct, routines of work, and way of thought to impose themselves suddenly upon the learner (Goodson, 1946, p. 35).

Besides this emphasis on "active learning", the "whole child", democratic processes and individual differences, there is a focus on the preparation for adult life:

> The need for a thorough and deep development of the person from within receives high recognition. This kind of education relates itself to the aspirations and concerns of people as they try to bring order into their lives. Therefore, it strives to stay in touch with the demands that life places upon the individual (p. 35).

This description not only represents a major shift in the dominant form of curriculum and pedagogy actually practiced at the time, it also echoes the beliefs of Collier and Lewin.

At this point, it is important to remember that the term "progressive" had not one, but several meanings. As will be seen, some of the early efforts of the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute staff clearly match the "social meliorist" position described by Kliebard (1986). There is, however, also a strong emphasis on the "developmentalist" position. The school based curriculum development efforts, in many cases, also had their roots in efforts, such as those in Denver in 1922, that were "strongly tinged with social efficiency ideas" (Kliebard, p. 212). The Progressive Education Association had, in the 1930's, become a curious collection of people advocating often contradictory positions. Kliebard comments:

> The tenuous common cause that held them together was their disillusionment and in some cases outright antagonism to the traditional course of study. The source of the opposition, however, varied. By some, the traditional curriculum was seen as ignoring the natural course of development in children and youth as well as their interests and penchant for activity; by others, it was regarded as supremely non-functional, dangerously ignoring the actual roles that adults are called upon to play in our society, leaving society bereft of the trained individuals that would make it work; and by still others, it was clearly lacking in social direction, particularly irrelevant to issues of social justice and social renewal (p. 227).

Understanding the diversity in the "progressive" movement is crucial to understanding how conflicting forms of action research emerged in the later years. The curriculum vision behind action research, though loosely "progressive", actually embodied a number of views.

By 1948, some of the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute staff had clearly aligned themselves with efforts to produce "a curriculum organized around the persistent life situations which learners encounter" (Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute Staff, 1948, p. 311). Although this action research work would later become a part of the efforts to create a "life adjustment" curriculum, (See Cooperative Research..., 1950), this earlier work shows influences of a cultural critique aimed at social reconstruction rather than adjustment. The staff participated in an analysis of the new social conditions that the depression and war had brought and identified several aspects to which education needed to respond. These included the "urgency of the one-world ideal", the "need for a stable and prosperous economy", and the "necessity for reducing intergroup tensions". These "needs" were seen to require experimentation in such areas as the "intercultural grouping of children", "procedures that reduce barriers between peoples", the "methods of cooperative policy making", the "resolution of conflicting interests and values", and "instruction that utilizes group dynamics to influence the processes by which people make choices" (Goodson, pp. 36-41).

Two other points lead to a further understanding of how the social vision of the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute included both a radical, democratic vision, particularly in the area of economics, and a social engineering aspect. In

discussing the "need for a stable and prosperous economy, the assumption was that such an economy depended on "the equitable distribution of goods and services" to reduce the conflict-producing "uneven distribution of economic opportunity and power" (Goodson, p. 37). In order to accomplish this, however, research into a kind of "democratic social engineering" was seen as necessity:

> Experimentation is needed to discover the ways in which the school can influence people to assure the development of a discipline, both intellectual and emotional in scope and influence, that meets the present urgency of public problems (p. 38).

The overall goal was "educating for a personality type" - a person who is socially sensitive, cooperative, thinking (i.e. can define problems, formulate plans, check plans against facts and values, and act upon tentative conclusions), creative and self-directing - the "democratic person" (pp. 41-42).

In order to respond to the new context and its needs, the institute began cooperative projects on five major themes. Among these were experimentation on children's needs and interests, health, economic competence, and the general design of the curriculum, especially for the non-college bound or "those with below-average ability". Particularly in these last two areas the aims were focused on "democratic procedures", "desirable ways of dealing with intergroup as well as person-to-person relations" and the "importance of cooperation to a democracy" (Mackenzie, 1946, pp. 440-443).

In addition to working with the school districts, the staff and their graduate students were to conduct research which we would recognize today as "action research on action research". Their major areas of concern in this undertaking were group dynamics, and "investigation of the barriers to curriculum change" and "the means and methods by which change can be hastened" (Mackenzie, 1946, p. 445). A final task of the institute was to be the publication and dissemination of findings. Thus in many was the work of the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute represents not only a beginning point for action research in education, but also for later studies on the process of change.

While one might also see an antecedent for the research, development, and dissemination model which would later achieve predominance, the actual characteristics of the "cooperative action research" of the Institute differed significantly. First, the "research worker" was not seen as a "mere observer", but rather as an "active participant". Second, the people involved (teachers, children, parents, and others) were seen as "research assistants" rather than "subjects", and they contributed to the whole research process. Third, hypotheses were seen as "programs for improvement". Finally, it was a flexible, "process" approach in which techniques and hypotheses could be modified as the research progress[ed]" (Cunningham and Miel, 1947, p. 370); Mackenzie, 1947, pp. 362-363).

The themes of "cooperation" and "learning how to live and work" together were salient aspects to the ideological content of the post-war educational literature, as was the idea that the time was appropriate for new beginnings. The post war years were a time of change for the public schools. Enrollment increases due to pressures for universal secondary education and from the "baby boom" were compounding the already existing teacher shortage. One author saw the post-war era as emphasizing:

> An increased concern with the dynamics of human relationships - as a fundamental aspect of democracy, as an essential in good teaching, as a crucial element in cooperative curriculum improvement, and as a part of the research process (McKim, 1957, p. 27).

The school curriculum was to undergo major changes, as the attempt was made to adjust to new demands on schooling. In this context, the work of the educational action researchers had begun.

The earlier themes of community, of "progressive" education, of school-based curriculum development, of the need for a closer knowledge-practice connection, of the benefits of field research, as well as the continuing tension between democracy and social engineering, were all evident in the early work of the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute. The theme of "ethnic relations" of Collier, is now, perhaps through the influence of Lewin, seen as "human relations", "getting

along". The related focus on demographic changes in the school population was to be a continuing aspect of action research, but for now, the concern was to be with the acceptance of this type of activity as a legitimate form of educational research.

The Method of Science: Depoliticizing Action Research

Stephen Corey, who from his post at the University of Chicago, had worked with the Horace Mann - Lincoln Institute and later moved to Teachers College, is probably the most well-known figure in the early action research work. In his book, Corey cited all of the antecedents of action research described earlier, (1953, p. 7). Although seemingly very committed to the concept, he, like many others of the time, seemed to be ambivalent to the term itself: "I hold no especial brief for the name, but it has some currency and is sufficiently descriptive" (p. viii). Also, and in contrast to the works of Collier and Lewin, the theme of "democracy" was not assumed by Corey to be an integral element of research: "...the use of the method of science in the solution of practical educational problems can be adequately defended for its own sake" (p. 17).

The acceptance of action research as a legitimate research form seemed quite important to Corey. He argued that there was only a "relative" difference between "research" and everyday problem solving (1953, p.72). He also felt that the quality of the research by teachers that he advocated, would gradually improve as they gained experience (pp. 82-83). Validity, to Corey, was to be judged "by its effects on human welfare" (p. 17). Generalizations, he argued, were for the purpose of projecting results in similar situations - what he called "vertical generalizations", not for the purpose of projecting results to larger populations - what he called "lateral generalizations". This rather ingenious distinction made techniques such as random sampling or normal distribution unnecessary (pp. 13-14).

Unlike Collier and Lewin, the research Corey described has a totally different division of labor. Although "experts" might be called in to consult,

the major responsibility for the research lay on the cooperative group. Doing research in groups, although not the only way seen to conduct action research, was, to Corey, the preferred method. His language in describing the advantages of group action research echoes the "group dynamics" work of Lewin and his followers: 1) an increased commitment to change, 2) an increased probability that the actions proposed would be possible, 3) a greater range and variety of talent, 4) a reduction of individual risk, and 5) the prevention of feelings of manipulation (pp. 37-39).

That the potential in action research for social engineering also played a role in Corey's thinking is evident in the last point. Some writers on action research at the time were quite aware of this issue. Herbert Thelen, for example, also from the University of Chicago, considered action research as guided by "the theory of those human interactions by which change is either facilitated or resisted". The process of curriculum change through action research, could then be viewed as an engineering issue: "The change of a curriculum reflects changes in attitudes, concept structure, skills and needs in the teachers" (1948, pp. 577-578). When viewed in this way, the knowledge produced through action research, as in the case of Lewin and Collier, becomes not <u>educational</u> knowledge, but knowledge about the group process. The educational theory involved then becomes not a problematic to be explored through action research, but more of a body of knowledge to be adjusted to context. Seen in this light, Corey's version of action research, with its insistence on the validity of the knowledge that was produced by teachers through their action research, stands in contrast not only to the "curriculum engineering" model of Thelen, but also to Lewin and Collier.

Corey's outline of the actual process of action research seems to be a mixture of both Lewin and Dewey, but also reflects in its language, more of a concern with the terms of "basic" research. He noted that action research was a cyclical process, whereby studies "revealed new problems, which in turn suggested the need for new action hypotheses to be tested" (1953, p. 35).

For Corey, there were five "elements of a design for action research":

> 1. The identification of a problem area about which an individual or group is sufficiently concerned to want to take some action. 2. The selection of a specific problem and the formulation of a hypothesis or prediction that implies a goal and a procedure for reaching it... 3. The careful recording of actions taken and the accumulation of evidence to determine the degree to which the goal has been achieved. 4. The inference from this evidence of generalizations regarding the relation between the actions and the desired goal. 5. The continuous retesting of these generalizations in action situations (pp. 40-41).

This emphasis on "hypothesis testing" and data gathering by the teachers themselves, is a significant difference between Corey's orientation and that of Lewin and Collier, and reflects in part the influence of the earlier school based curriculum development projects. It also shows a view of action research as producing educational knowledge, not theory only about "group dynamics" or how to facilitate change. This is an important distinction between some of the action research done education and that done in other fields.

Corey was not unaware of the demands such research might make on the teachers, and focused much attention on the role that supervisors and administrators might play to assist. These included providing an atmosphere for and encouraging experimentation, but also concrete changes in working conditions - substitute teachers, extra materials, and clerical assistance (1953, p. 86-104).

Corey's expectations for the outcomes of action research were clearly focused on educational improvement. To him, it was a vehicle to increase the possibility that teachers and administrators would change, and thereby improve their educational practices. The group participation, like that of Collier and Lewin, would itself act as a facilitator of change. Unlike Collier and Lewin, its purpose seems primarily instrumental. The principled commitment to democracy that had accompanied earlier forms of action research, was missing, at least in Corey's writing. Corey's commitment, rather, seemed to be the development of a body of knowledge and skills that would assist practitioners in adjusting to cultural change, rather than participating in it. It is worth noting, however,

that some of the actual classroom projects done at the time reflect a desire to help children learn more about democracy or to establish democratic processes either in the classroom or in the staff - administration relationship. (Corey, 1953; "Cooperative Research", 1950).

Here one can speculate a bit about the effect of the context. Corey, in his discussion of the "democracy" question in action research refers to Whittaker Chambers, a prominent figure in the McCarthy era (1953, p. 24), who equated the scientific method with communism. The years since the initiation of the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute had brought a great deal of changes in the problems of schooling. They had also brought the Berlin Airlift and the beginnings of the "Cold War", and were, at the time of Corey's writing, on the edge of the Korean War and McCarthyism. While this point is not clearly evidenced, there is a noticeable change of emphasis in the issues of educational journals of the time, from the discussion of "democracy" and "one-world ideals" in the war-time years discussed earlier, to the focus on the "gap" between theory and practice and the need for the "re-education" of teachers in the 1950's.

Into Inservice and Personal Development

Corey's work was only a part of a larger attempt to effect curriculum change during the post-war era and into the 1950's. The groups doing action research were complemented by others who also advocated the participation of teachers in curriculum planning and improvement (Miel, 1946; Sharp, 1951; Passow, Miles, and Corey, 1955). Both at Teachers College and elsewhere, many people advocated the use of action research. In these, too, the context themes and the tension between democracy and social engineering continued.

Best known of these action researchers are Hilda Taba (1957) and Abraham Shumsky (1958). With both, the efforts to establish action research as a distinct research form seem to have faded. Rather, perhaps as a result of the increasing teacher shortage in the 1950's, the emphasis was on the opportunities in action research for inservice education and personal development of teachers. In Taba's

work, the legacy of the school based curriculum movement is evident, but there is more of a focus on classroom practices, especially issues of curriculum adjustment and classroom control (Taba and Noel, 1957).

Other themes persisted. Taba's writings show an explicit response to the changing composition of the school, at least on the issue of class. Race, though surely an issue nationally at the time, is not mentioned. Unlike Corey, she felt that action research "should seek especially to enhance the democratic quality in teaching and in supervisory leadership (Taba and Noel, 1957, p. 6). Shumsky's social vision, according to McTaggart (1988, MS p. 14), was focused on the recapturing of a sense of "community":

> An action research movement is potentially a grass roots approach to the solution of community problems. It means activating the social and spiritual life of the community in a search for self-improvement. It means providing a social setting where people can work together, dream together of a better community, and try to translate their dreams into the language of action and evaluation (Shumsky, 1956, cited in McTaggart, p. 15)

In spite of this concern with community, it is with Shumsky's work that action research became seen primarily as an individual effort, rather than a group task. The other people involved in projects functioned as a support rather than a collaborative group.

On the issue of social engineering, Taba and Shumsky differed. For Taba, one of the purposes of action research was "to change those who are making the changes, that is, to enhance the insights of the teachers, to alter their attitudes..." (Taba, 1957, p. 43). Shumsky's interests in action research were consciously <u>not</u> intended to be the manipulation of a social engineer. In discussing the formation of a teacher's "action ideology" through the process of action research, he asserted:

> The meaningfulness of this ideology to the investigator is determined by the extent to which it is derived under conditions of freedom, and the extent to which it is a product of a re-examination of the relationship between the teachers' system of values and his field problems (Shumsky, 1958, p. 122).

The "conditions of freedom" in the 1950's may well have included a need for a more individualistic form of action research.

With Shumsky's work, what has been called the "first generation" of action research (McTaggart and Singh, 1986) came to a close. Begun in an era emphasizing local curriculum development, especially that of a "progressive" or "life adjustment" type, its presence in the educational literature faded into the background of the new, nationally funded, "expert"-designed curriculum, centered around the "structure of the disciplines" (Kliebard, (1986).

Persistent Themes in Action Research

This paper has revealed several continuing context themes in the development of action research through the 1950's. These themes have great bearing, not only on understanding the recent resurgence of interest in action research, but also on efforts to classify versions of action research. Rather than merely "technical", the early development of action research was a complex mixture of tendencies perhaps best understood as part of a central tension between "democracy" and "social engineering". The classification system has tended to mask these persistent themes, thus allowing the central tension to be overlooked.

In the 1930's, a time of great political, economic, and social crisis, Collier sought to restore a sense of community. For him, "progressive" education of a very early developmentalist kind was combined with a concern for "ethnic relations" and a belief in local democracy. These required a form of "grass roots" research that solved problems through an anthropological form of field research. Although he saw the potential for social engineering theory being produced by such a research form, he rejected it. Yet his very existence as an "expert" in the field, raised another issue - that of the development of a class of social researchers whose continuing work depended on the cooperation of those in the field.

In Lewin's work from the mid-1930's until the late 1940's, the tension between democracy and social engineering is strong, perhaps because of the way the larger social context affected him. The theme of "ethnic relations" grows into a concern with resolving social conflicts, especially race and class prejudice, through a study of group dynamics. The facilitation of desired changes was made more effective through the science of action research.

In education, many of these same themes emerged. Driven by a strong social vision, the staff at the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute in the 1940's sought a way to further "progressive" education, broadly defined as a rejection of the "traditional school subjects" approach. They found a way to bring their ideas to a wider audience in the tradition of school based curriculum development coupled with Dewey's method of inquiry and his emphasis on practice as the basis of science. Their interest in full teacher involvement, the community, and field research meshed with a general skepticism toward laboratory research, a desire for "democratic schools", and a concern for an increasing and increasingly diverse student population. Yet they also found in action research a way to consciously study the change process itself. The knowledge produced through action research could improve schools. It also could "engineer" those improvements.

It is with Corey' work, into the early 1950's, that most histories of action research in education begin. While Wallace (1987) finds reason to believe that Corey maintained a belief in the values implicit in action research (p. 101), there has been some evidence shown that, at least in his major writings about action research, the theme of "democracy" was not a central part of his efforts. Rather, the focus was on establishing action research as an alternate, but legitimate, form of research. In his insistence on the importance of teacher-generated knowledge, he does show a kind of faith in the "grass roots" democracy of Collier's earlier efforts. More prominent, however, is his clarification of the potential in action research for guiding desirable changes, both in teachers

and in the curriculum. The post-war changes in the school population clearly were an impetus for this change effort. In advocating and implementing a "life adjustment" curriculum, Corey, too, found reason to reject the "subject centered" curriculum.

Categorization schemes, in their attempt to classify particular version of action research as either "technical/traditional" or "practical/moral" or "critical/emancipatory" tend to obscure the persistence of particular contextual themes. "Field research", "community", "school-based curriculum development", "progressive" education, "teacher-as-researcher", demographic changes, a "knowledge-practice gap", and "ethnic/human relations" have been a part of the various forms of action research, and are a part of that central tension between democracy and social engineering. Social engineering may well have been a part of the definition of democracy during the 1930's and 1940's. Only today as we look back is the contradiction highlighted. This historical analysis helps to recognize this tension.

Toward Understanding Action Research Today

This historical and comparative study of action research provides a way to understand the reemergence of action research today. The themes that emerged continue to be part of current work as does the tension between democracy and social engineering. Action research did, in the late 1950's, seem to decline in prominence, although it is as yet unclear exactly how prevalent the practice was even in its "heyday". It is, however, important to realize that action research did not "die". It remained a consistent and fairly frequent entry in the Education Index throughout the 1960's, and was part of continued efforts to involve teachers in research (e.g. Barnes, 1960). In the 1970's, the tradition continued in several areas, for example in work with teachers and student teachers (e.g. McNamara, 1972), in community action programs (e.g. Burges, 1976; Barrera, 1974), and in research in the Language Arts (e.g. Stauffer, 1976). Another usage of the term continued in a more "intervention-innovation" mode

(see, for example, Price and Politser, 1980; Rapoport, 1985) in areas of education, organizational development, and social welfare research (e.g. Clark, P., 1972; Lees and Smith, 1975).

Significant to the recent reemergence of action research in the U.K., is the continuance of community service research throughout the 1960's and 1970's, often addressing problems of working class pupils in the new comprehensive schools. Although not considered, by some, to be successful (Whyte, 1986, pp. 255-256), such projects maintained the tradition of action research partly through the efforts of the Tavistock Institute, an organization with close connections to Lewin and his successors.

The field studies approach, illuminative evaluation, and the development of alternative, qualitative methodologies have carried further the theme from the 1930's of looking closely at everyday events. Many, but not all, action research projects carried out today employ an anthropological approach to data collection and analysis. Related, too, to the era of Collier and Lewin is the recurrent theme of "ethnic" or "human relations" in many projects. Broadly defined to include questions of gender, race, and class, the theme is present in the work of Stenhouse (1980, 1983) and in such projects as the Girls and Occupational Choice (Chisholm and Holland, 1986) and the Girls into Science and Technology (Whyte, 1986) projects in the U.K., and it has played a role in the work at Deakin University in Australia (McTaggart, et al., 1986). In the recent work in the U.S., the theme has not generally been as pronounced (see Huling, 1982), but there is interest in related efforts (e.g. Heath, 1983). As in the earlier era, some of this interest can be attributed to the demographic changes in school populations experienced in some countries as a result of expanding the availability of secondary school education.

The strongest theme, not surprisingly, since many of the current definitions of action research require it, is the idea of the teacher as researcher. Perhaps the most influential of the recent writers on this topic has

been Lawrence Stenhouse, but most action research today maintains the tradition. An often forgotten aspect, at least in the U.S., to Stenhouse's work was the thorough rejection of the dominant "objectives based" model for curriculum design, in favor of a more "process" approach (Stenhouse, 1975). Just as in the earlier era, much of action research today, but not all (see Tikunoff and Mergendollar, 1983) is done within a framework that rejects the dominant mode of curriculum development in favor of a school-based, alternative model (See Elliott & Adelman, 1973; Stenhouse, 1980; Klafki, et al., 1982; Kemmis, et al., 1983; Chisholm, 1988; Elliott, 1988). In the U.S., too, the "process" approach to the teaching of writing has provided the core of many recent projects (e.g. Goswami & Stillman, 1987; Mohr & Maclean, 1987).

The knowledge-practice gap theme, too, enters into projects. In some U.S. projects (e.g. Tikunoff, et al., 1979) it is particularly salient. As in the earlier era, action research, seen in this light, becomes a way to "bridge the gap" between theory and practice. Yet even in action research forms which embody a different, often reflexive or dialectical theory-practice relationship, the theme emerges as part of an explanation for the growth of action research. In some cases (e.g. Schneider, 1980), the inability of state-funded, traditional research forms to adequately respond to the needs of expanded and changing schools is seen as part of a "legitimation crisis", in which alternative forms of research compete (See also Elliott, 1984).

Demographic changes in the school population, a concern with issues of race, class, and gender, the knowledge-practice gap, a vision of the teacher as researcher, school-based, alternative models for curriculum development, and field research methods have been themes in many of the recent action research projects. Through these, the tension between democracy and social engineering continues to be worked out. From a concern that research topics emanate from teachers, through those involving equalizing relationships in classrooms, to an explicit emancipatory project, a "democratic impulse" is action research is

evident. Yet within these projects, the social engineering element is also present. It can take the form of changing teachers attitudes towards research, developing hypotheses about the ways teachers develop, or "facilitating" the research process. All of these, carried out "above" the teachers' own action research, carry with them the potential for "engineered" change. In action research, whether guided by a purely "technical" logic, a moral position, or the emancipatory intent of a Gadamer or Habermas, the central contradiction remains. This contradiction must be addressed by all proponents of action research.

References

Agee, James & Evans, Walker. (1960). Let us now praise famous men. New York: Ballantine Books.

Aikin, W.M. (1942). The Story of the Eight-year Study. New York: Harper and Brothers.

Barnes, John B. (1960). Educational research for classroom teachers. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

Barrera, Mario & Vialpando, Giralda. (1974). Action research in defense of the Barrio. Los Angeles: Aztlan.

Beatty, Willard. (1940, Nov.). Uncle Sam develops a new kind of rural school. Elementary School Journal, 41(3), 185-193.

Benne, Kenneth D. (1948, April). An approach to issues underlying curriculum development. Journal of Educational Research, 41(7), 561-576.

Buckingham, Burdette Ross. (1926). Research for teachers. New York: Silver, Burdett and Co.

Burges, Bill. (1976). Facts for a change: Citizen action research for better schools. Boston: Institute for Responsive Education.

Bush, Robert N. (1949, Dec.). A human relations approach to instruction. Educational Leadership, 7(3), 153-158.

Caswell, Hollis. (1950, April). Research in the classroom. Educational Leadership, 7(7), 438-445.

Chien, Isidor, Cook, Stuart, & Harding, John. (1948) The field of action Research. American Psychologist, 3, 43-50.

Chisholm, Lynne A. (1988, Oct. 24). Action research: Some methodological and political considerations. Seminar for the University of Helsinki Department of Sociology.

Chisholm, Lynne A. & Holland, Janet. (1986). Girls and occupational choice: anti-sexism in action in a curriculum development project. British Journal of Sociology of Education, 7(4), 353-365.

Clark, Alfred W. (Compiler). (1976). Experimenting with organizational life: The action research approach. London: Plenum.

Clark, Peter A. (1972). Action research and organizational change. London: Harper and Row.

Collier, John. (1945). United States Indian administration as a laboratory of ethnic relations. Social Research, 12, 265-303.

Collier, John. (1963). From every zenith. Denver: Sage Books.

Collinge, Miller R. & Dimond, Stanley E. (1949, Feb.). Detroit makes a study. The Journal of Education, 132(2), 37-39.

Cooperative research and curriculum improvement. (1950, April). Teachers College Record, 51(7), 407-474.

Corey, Stephen M. (1953). Action research to improve school practices. New York: Teachers College.

Cronbach, Lee J. & Suppes, Patrick. (Eds.). (1969). Research for tomorrow's schools: Disciplined inquiry for education, Report of the Committee on Educational Research of the National Academy of Education. London: Macmillan.

Cunningham, Ruth & Miel, Alice. (1947, Jan.). Frontiers of educational research in elementary school curriculum development. Journal of Educational Research, 40(5), 365-372.

Dewey, John. (1910). How we think. Boston: D.C. Heath.

Dewey, John.(1929). The sources of a science of education. In Jo Ann Boydston (Ed.), The later works: Vol. 5, 1929-30 (pp. 3-40). Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984.

Dewey, John. (1938). Logic: The theory of inquiry. N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Elliott, John. (1984). Legitimation crisis and the growth of educational action research. Cambridge: Cambridge Institute of Education (mimeo).

Elliott, John. (1987, June). Educational theory, practical philosophy, and action research. British Journal of Educational Studies, 35(2), 149-169.

Elliott, John. (1988, April). Teachers as researchers: Implications for supervision and teacher education. Division K Invited Address, Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans.

Elliott, John & Adelman, Clem. (1973). Reflecting where the action is: The design of the Ford Teaching Project. Education for Teaching, 92, 8-20.

Everett, Samuel. (1938). The community school. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co.

Goodson, Max R. (1946, Oct.). Charting a course for educational progress. Teachers College Record, 48(1), 35-60.

Goswami, Dixie & Stillman, Peter R. (Eds.). (1987). Reclaiming the Classroom: Teacher research as an agency for change. Portsmouth: Boynton/Cook.

Graebner, William. (1987). The engineering of consent: Democracy and authority in Twentieth-century America. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Grim, Paul R. (1948, Sept.). Designs for curriculum development. Journal of Educational Research, 42(1), 18-29.

Grundy, Shirley J. (1982, Oct.). Three modes of action research. Curriculum Perspectives, 2(3), 23-34.

Hanson, Abel. (1948, Oct.). Cooperative research: The significance of the Metropolitan School Study Council. Teachers College Record, 50(1), 3-9.

Heath, Shirley B. (1983). Ways with words. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation Staff. (1945, Jan.) Departmental notes. Teachers College Record, 46(4), 275-276.

Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation Staff. (1948, Feb.). A progress report. Teachers College Record, 49(5), 305-362.

Horace Mann-Lincoln Study Group. (1948, Nov.). Recommended: Group research for teachers. Teachers College Record, 50(2), 108-113.

Huling, Leslie L. (1982, March). Interactive Research & Development in low income minority schools. A paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York.

Hult, Margareta & Lennung, Sven-Ake. (1980, May). Toward a definition of action research: A note and bibliography. Journal of Management Studies, 17(2), 241-250.

Iverson, Katherine. (1978). Progressive education for Native Americans: Washington ideology and Navajo reservation implementation. Review Journal of Philosophy and Social Science, 3(2), 231-255.

James, Thomas. (1986, April 11). The social scientist and minority groups in crisis. History Department Faculty Seminar, Wesleyan University.

Jenks, R. Stephen. (1970). An action-research approach to organizational change. Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 6(2), 131-150.

Kemmis, Stephen. (1980, Nov.). Action research in retrospect and prospect. Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Sydney.

Kemmis, Stephen, et al. (1983). The Action Research Reader. Geelong, Victoria, Australia: Deakin University Press.

Klafki, Wolfgang, et al., (1982). Schulnah Curriculumentwicklung und Handlungsforschung. Weinheim und Basel: Beltz.

Kliebard, Herbert M. (1986). The struggle for the American curriculum, 1893-1958. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Lees, Ray. (1975). Research strategies for social welfare. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Lees, Ray & Smith, George. (1975). Action-research in community development. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Lewin, Gertrud & Lewin, Kurt. (1942, Oct.). Democracy and the school. Understanding the Child, 10(1), 7-11.

Lewin, Kurt. (1938, July). Experiments on autocratic and democratic principles. The Social Frontier, 4(37), 316-319.

Lewin, Kurt. (1944, Jan.). The dynamics of group action. Educational Leadership, 1, 195-200.

Lewin, Kurt. (1946). Action research and minority problems. Journal of Social Issues, 2(4), 34-46. In Stephen Kemmis & Robin McTaggart (Eds.), The action research reader (3rd ed.) (pp. 41-46). Geelong, Victoria: Deakin University Press, 1988.

Lewin, Kurt. (1947). Channels of group life: Social planning and action research. Human Relations, 1, 143-153.

Lewin, Kurt & Grabbe, Paul. (1945, Aug.). Conduct, knowledge, and acceptance of new values. Journal of Social Issues, 1(3), 53-64.

Lippitt, Ronald & Radke, Marian. (1946, March). New trends in the investigation of prejudice. In Controlling group prejudice, The annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 244, 167-176.

Mackenzie, Gordon N. (1946, April). The Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation. Teachers College Record, 47(7), 438-445.

Mackenzie, Gordon N. (1947, Jan.). Frontiers in educational research in secondary school curriculum building. Journal of Educational Research, 40(5), 356-364.

Marrow, Alfred J. (1969) The practical theorist: The life and work of Kurt Lewin. N. Y.: Basic Books.

McKernan, Jim. (1988, Spring). The countenance of curriculum action research: Traditional, collaborative, and emancipatory - critical conceptions. Journal of Curriculum and Supervision, 3(3), 173-200.

McKim, Margaret G. (1957). Curriculum research in historical perspective. In Research for curriculum improvement (pp. 14-40). Washington, D.C.: Association for Curriculum and Supervision.

McTaggart, Robin. (1988). Action research: A prologue to praxis. Geelong, Victoria: Deakin U Press.

McTaggart, Robin. et al. (1986). Action research in curriculum: A course guide, Geelong, Australia: Deakin University School of Education.

McTaggart, Robin & Singh, Michael. (1986). A fourth generation of action research: Notes on the Deakin Seminar. Geelong, Victoria: Deakin University, Draft Version.

McNamara, James F. (1972, Dec.). Teachers and students combine efforts in action research. The Clearing House, 242-248.

Miel, Alice. (1946). Changing the curriculum: A social process. New York: Appleton-Century Co.

Mohr, Marian M. & Maclean, Marion B. (1987). Working together: A guide for teacher-researchers. Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English.

Noffke, Susan E. & Zeichner, Kenneth M. (1987, April). Action research and teacher thinking: The first phase of the action research on action research project at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Paper prepared for the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Washington, D.C.

Passow, A. Harry, Miles, Mathew B., & Corey, Stephen M. (1955). Training curriculum leaders for cooperative research. N. Y.: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Peters, Michael & Robinson, Viviane. (1984). The origins and status of action research. Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 20(2), 113-124.

Pflieger, Elmer F. (1949, Dec.). A consultative-cooperative method. Educational Leadership, 7(3), 181-185.

Price, Richard & Politser, Peter E. (Eds.). (1980). Evaluation and action in the social environment. N.Y.: Academic Press.

Rapoport, Robert N. (1985). Children, youth, and families: The action-research relationship. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ryan, W. Carson, Jr., et al. (1932, Feb.). Indian education today. Progressive Education, 9(2), 81-179.

Schneider, Ulrike. (1980). Sozialwissenschaftliche Methodenkrise und Handlungsforschung. Frankfurt: Campus Verlag.

Schubert, William H. & Schubert, Ann L. (1984, April 23). Sources of a theory of action research in progressive education. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans.

Sharp, George. (1951). Curriculum development as re-education of the teacher. N.Y.: Teachers College.

Shumsky, Abraham. (1956). Cooperation in action research: A rationale. Journal of Educational Sociology, 30, 180-185.

Shumsky, Abraham. (1958). The action research way of learning: An approach to in-service education. N. Y.: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Stauffer, Russell G. (1976, August). Action research in language-experience approaches to instructional procedures. Newark, Delaware: University of Delaware.

Stenhouse, Lawrence. (1975). An introduction to curriculum research and development. London: Heinemann.

Stenhouse, Lawrence. (1983). Authority, education and emancipation. London: Heinemann.

Stenhouse, Lawrence. (Ed.). (1980). Curriculum development in action. London: Heinemann Educational Books.

Stefon, Frederick J. (1983, Fall; 1984, Winter). The Indians' Zarathustra: An investigation into the philosophical roots of John Collier's Indian New Deal educational and administrative policies. Journal of Ethnic Studies, 11(364), 1-28, 28-45.

Taba, Hilda. (1957). Problem identification. In Research for curriculum improvement (pp. 42-71). Washington, D.C.: Association for Curriculum and Supervision.

Taba, Hilda & Noel, Elizabeth. (1957). Action research: A case study. Washington, D. C.,: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development .

Teachers College proposes a new plan of school experimentation. (1946, May). Teachers College Record, 47(8), 521-523.

Thelen, Herbert A. (1948, April). Engineering research in curriculum building. Journal of Educational Research, 41(7), 577-596.

Tikunoff, William J. & Mergendollar, John R. (1983). Inquiry as a means to professional growth: The teacher as researcher. In Gary Griffin, (Ed.), Staff Development, 82nd Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II (pp. 210-227). Chicago: NSSE.

Tikunoff, William J., et al. (1979). Interactive research and development on Teaching: Final report. San Francisco: Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development.

Tornatzky, Louis G., et. al. (1980). Innovation and social process. N. Y.: Pergammon Press.

Wallace, Mike. (1987). A historical review of action research: Some implications for the education of teachers in their managerial role. Journal of Education for Teaching, 13(2), 97-115.

Watson, Goodwin. (1949, Dec.). John Dewey as a pioneer in social psychology. Teachers College Record, 51(3), 139-143.

Whipple, Gut M. (Ed.). (1938). The scientific movement in education, 37th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II. Bloomington: Public School Publishing Co.

Whyte, Judith. (1986). Girls into science and technology. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.